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ABSTRACT

Many stressed individuals seek help first from clergy, who in turn have stresses of their own. This study examined stress in single and married clergy and those clergy married to other clergy. In single clergy, 106 females and 134 males were compared on Osipow and Spokane measures and were found to differ significantly on stress from the Physical Environment. On the Religion and Stress Questionnaire, the women significantly more often saw women handling stress on the job in positive ways, were more offended by some changes in language, and were more positive about women using their birthnames instead of married names in religious settings. In married clergy, 145 females and 93 males were compared: the males had significantly higher Role Insufficiency, Role Ambiguity, and Role Boundary Vocational Strain and lower Recreation personal resources. The males had more experience of women being treated as a novelty in seminary but were less favorable to using gender-fair language in church. Clergymen married to nonclergy wives and clergymen married to clergy wives were very close in their scores on the Osipow and Spokane measures. Clergywomen married to nonclergy husbands had lower Role and higher Recreation and Social Supports. In clergy with nonclergy spouses, clergywomen scored significantly lower in Role Insufficiency and Role Ambiguity. (Author/ABL)

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STRESS IN SINGLE AND MARRIED CLERGY AND CLERGY COUPLES

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Many stressed individuals seek help first from clergy, who in turn have stresses of their own. In single clergy, 106 females and 134 males were compare on Osipow and Spokane measures and significantly differed on stress from the Physical Environment. On the Religion and Stress Questionnaire, the women significantly more often saw women handling stress on the job in positive ways, were more offended by some changes in language, and are more positive about women using their birth names instead of married ones in religious settings. In married clergy, 145 females and 93 males were compared: the males had significant ly higher Role Insufficiency, Role Ambiguity, and Rol Boundary Vocational Strain and lower Recreation person al resources. The males had more experience of women being treated as a novelty in seminary but are less favorable to using gender-fair language in church.

Clergymen married to nonclergy wives and clergymen married to clergy wives were very close in their scores on the Osipow and Spokane measures. However, clergywomen married to clergymen experienced more stress, strain, and less personal resources than did clergywomen married to nonclergy husbands. On the Religion and Stress Questionnaire, clergywomen more than their clergy husbands saw women handling work-related stress more positively than men do. Clergywomen married to nonclergy husbands had lower Role Insufficiency, Vocational and Psychological Strain and higher Recreation and Social Supports. In clergy with nonclergy spouses, clergywomen scored significant ly lower in Role Insufficiency and Role Ambiguity.

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STRESS IN SINGLE AND MARRIED CLERGY AND CLERGY COUPLES

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Many stressed individuals seek help from clergy before going to other counselors and therapists. Yet, because of the demands made upon clergy and because many of them have trouble saying "no" to those seeking help and at all times, clergy themselves are stressed and often suffering from role-overload. Who suffers the most stress and strain: Single or married clergy or those clergy married to other clergy?

To answer this question, clergy were compared on the Osipow and Spokane (1981, 1983) measures of stress, strain, and coping resources and on the specially devised Rayburn and Richmond Religion and Stress questionnaire (1982). In the single clergy group, 106 females and 134 males were found to differ significantly on stress from Physical Environment ($<.01$). On the Religion and Stress Questionnaire, the women significantly more often than men saw women handling work-related stress in more positive ways, were less often offended by some changes in language, and were more positive about women using their birth names rather than married names in religious settings. Further, when 30 single male and 30 single female ministers were matched on age (male mean age=44.83 years, range 28-64 years; female mean age=39.93 years, range 25-71 years), denomination (9 United Methodists, 8 Presbyterians, 8 Episcopalians, 2 Unitarian Universalists, 2 United Church of Christ, and a Lutheran in each group), race (27 caucasians and 3 blacks in each group), and job description (all were clergy with pulpit/congregations). these findings held with clergywomen experiencing more stress on Physical Environment than clergymen ($<.01$) do.

The two groups did not differ significantly on such Osipow and Spokane measures of occupational environment stress as Role Overload, Role Insufficiency, Role Ambiguity, Role Boundary, or Responsibility (although scores for the clergymen were higher on all of these measures than for clergywomen, indicating tendency to more stress for the males). On the Religion and Stress Questionnaire (RSQ), single clergywomen significantly more than single clergymen experienced women being treated as a novelty to be tolerated in seminary ($<.05$); thought that women, including themselves, experience stress from institutional and personal pressure in work in a negative way ($<.001$); yet the women thought that women, including themselves, handle work-related stress in a positive more than a negative way ($<.001$); the women perceived more than the men that women handle stress differently than their male counterparts ($<.05$), most often explaining that women expressed their emotions and thoughts more openly to others and networked with other women in similar job and social settings, while men worked out their stress more often in physical ways such as through sports and were not as open with others about their feelings; women were less offended by changes in language, favoring more inclusive language for women and men ($<.01$); and they were more positive than were the men in their thoughts and feelings about women religious professionals and congregants usings their birth names ($<.01$).

In married clergy, 145 females and 93 males were compared: The males had significantly higher Role Insufficiency, Role Ambiguity, Role Boundary, and Vocational Strain, and lower Recreation personal resources. On the RSQ, males had less experience of women being treated as a novelty in seminary and were less favorable to using gender-fair language in religious settings. When 35 married

clergywomen and 35 married clergymen were matched on age (male mean age=45.4, range=29-64; female mean age=44.2, range=29-66); denomination (14 United Methodists, 8 Presbyterians, 8 Episcopalians, 2 Unitarian Universalists, 2 United Church of Christ, and a Lutheran in each group); on race (33 caucasians and 2 blacks); and on job (church assignments, primarily pulpit duty and two as ministers of religious education), the clergymen had significantly higher stress from Role Ambiguity ($<.001$), Role Boundary ($<.05$), and Total Occupational Environment Scale ($<.05$) than did clergywomen. On the RSQ, clergywomen had more experience of women being treated as a novelty in seminary ($<.05$); women more perceived that women do not have equal opportunities for recruitment interviews and actual hiring on church staffs ($<.05$); the clergywomen thought that women, including themselves, handle work-related stress in more positive ways than did the clergymen think so ($<.05$); and the clergywomen were much less offended by any changes in language ($<.05$).

When 238 married clergy were compared to 240 single clergy (including 54 Roman Catholic priests, 50 brothers, and 51 nuns), significant differences were found at the $<.001$ level with the married religious professionals having higher stress on Role Overload, Role Ambiguity, Role Boundary, Responsibliity, and Total Occupational Environment Scale. The married group was also higher at the $<.001$ level on Psychological Strain, at the $<.01$ level on Total Personal Strain Questionnaire, and at the $<.05$ level on Vocational Strain. Further, the married group scored lower on Recreation coping resources ($<.001$) and on Rational/Cognitive Coping ($<.001$), as well as lower on Total Personal Resources Questionnaire ($<.05$) than did the single group. However, the married group scored higher on Social Supports ($<.01$) than did the single group. On the RSQ, the

married group had more experience of women being treated as a novelty in seminary ($<.001$); thought that women experience suspicion or rejection from colleagues and/or congregation ($<.01$); saw women experiencing stress from institutional and personal pressure in work in more negative ways ($<.001$); and were more positive about using more gender-fair language in church texts and hymnals (.001) and in their religious work setting ($<.001$); and were more positive about women religious professionals and congregants using their birth names ($<.001$) than did the single group. However, the married group were less positive about women closest to them preferring to use their birth name ($<.01$) or about seeing their religious setting as accepting of women using their birth name ($<.01$). Perhaps the fact that over half of the single group was comprised of Roman Catholic religious professionals accounts for the greater sensitivity of the married group toward stress and strain related to prejudice against women in the religious marketplace: Often priests were as sensitive as male but less sensitive than female Protestant ministers, but nuns and brothers were usually less sensitive than Protestant clergy on the stress and strain from gender issues.

To discern what the stress, strain, coping and gender issues would be, leaving out the Roman Catholic groups, 209 married and 60 single Protestant ministers were compared. About half of each group were female. While many of the significant differences dropped out, the married group still had more stress from Role Boundary (though now at the $<.05$ rather than at the $<.001$ level), higher Psychological Strain (again here at the $<.05$ rather than at the $<.001$ level). Again, the married group scored lower than did the single one on Recreation coping resources ($<.01$) and lower on Rational/

Cognitive Coping ($<.01$) but higher on Social Supports ($<.05$). On the RSQ, the married group was more in favor of using gender-fair language for church texts and hymnals ($<.05$), more positive in their thoughts and feelings about clergywomen and female congregants using their birth names ($<.05$) but were less favorable about women using their own birth name when this involves themselves as women or their spouses in the case of the clergymen ($<.05$).

When clergymen were compared, 30 single and 35 married Protestant ministers, they only differed significantly on Rational/Cognitive Coping, with the married clergymen scoring lower than the single clergymen ($<.05$). On this matched groups comparison, there were no significant differences on the RSQ.

A matched group comparison was then made of female clergy, 30 single and 35 married clergywomen. Only Psychological Strain significantly differed for the groups, with the married clergywomen having higher scores (greater strain) than the singles ($<.05$). On the RSQ, married clergywomen were less favorable to preferring to use their birth names ($<.01$).

Next, matched groups of 65 single and married clergywomen and 65 single and married clergymen were compared. The clergymen had higher scores on Role Ambiguity ($<.01$), Role Boundary ($<.01$), Total Occupational Environment Scale ($<.01$), and on Vocational Strain ($<.05$) than did the clergywomen. On the RSQ, the clergywomen had more experience of women being treated as a novelty in seminary ($<.001$); of seeing women experiencing stress from institutional and personal pressure at work in more negative ways ($<.001$); in perceiving that women, including themselves, handle work-related stress in more positive than negative ways ($<.001$); are less offended by any changes in language ($<.001$); and think and feel more

positively about women clergy and congregants using their birth names ($<.01$).

Finally, 108 clergy couples (clergy married to clergy) were compared to 60 single clergy, half of each group being female. Again, the married group had higher stress from Role Ambiguity ($<.05$), Role Boundary ($<.05$); and higher Vocational Strain ($<.05$), Psychological Strain ($<.05$), and Social Support ($<.05$). The married group had lower Recreation coping resources ($<.05$) and Rational/Cognitive Coping ($<.01$). On the RSQ, the only significant difference was that the clergy couples group more than the singles one planned to use more inclusive language for men and women in their religious work settings ($<.01$).

Overall, then, clergymen and married clergy seem to experience more stress and strain than women and single clergy. Clergymen married to nonclergy wives and clergymen married to clergy wives had very similar scores on the Osipow and Spokane measures. However, clergywomen married to clergymen experienced more stress, strain, and fewer personal resources than did clergywomen married to nonclergy husbands. On the RSQ, clergywomen more than their clergy husbands saw women handling stress on the job in more positive ways than men do. Clergywomen married to nonclergy husbands had lower Role Insufficiency, Vocational and Psychological Strain, and higher Physical Coping and Social Supports than their nonclergy husbands.

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